

Redistribution Commission

Canada which I have already outlined, if we are going to have some uniformity in carrying out redistribution.

The final point I want to make is that I would draw the government's attention to the desirability of having judges connected in some way with the redistribution process. This is the formula that has already been established in the province of Manitoba and it has worked there with eminent success. There have been no complaints concerning the workings of that independent commission on redistribution in the province of Manitoba. It was one of the proposals in a somewhat similar resolution and consequent legislation contemplated by the former administration, and it seems to me that it would be the best method of ensuring the high degree of independence which I am sure all hon. members of this committee are desirous of obtaining for the work of this commission.

[Translation]

Mr. Chapdelaine: Mr. Chairman, last Wednesday, when the house adjourned, I had not completed my remarks concerning redistribution of electoral constituencies, but I did not intend to complete them, because I had thought at that time that everything had been said at the resolution stage. My only hope was that, since all parties agreed to the redistribution, this might be done as soon as possible.

However, in view of the stand taken by the Conservatives, who seem to want to prolong the debate, without telling us just why, I feel I will not be blamed for prolonging it a little if I make a clear contribution to the proposed measure.

Mr. Chairman, after listening to several members, one reaches the conclusion that the real problem with redistribution is that it must be done in such a way that representation of one group of the population must not be detrimental to another group. In that connection, one recognizes the claim of some people who want the rural ridings to be represented according to their population and in as great a number as the rural ridings.

Mr. Chairman, I am of the opinion that the size of the electoral ridings as well as the linguistic and religious aspirations of the various areas must be considered in order to determine exactly the boundaries of an urban or a rural electoral riding.

As far as I am concerned, as I stated the other evening, in view of what is happening in the house, I would be in favour of a decrease in the number of members rather than of an increase since every time we are studying a bill, we have to go through the resolution stage where suggestions are made to the government but very seldom accepted since

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

it already holds its views on the matter. Moreover, when we come to the motion preceding the second or third reading of the bill, we renew our claims which always remain unsatisfied. Therefore, it would be better to do away with the resolution stage so that we would not have to listen so often to speakers who do not intend to make a constructive contribution to the progress of the business of the house.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that everyone agrees that the distribution of seats should be revised and that the principles of such a redistribution consist of the unbiased appointment of qualified people. However, in the present framework of Canadian politics, it is very difficult to find people who are proof against any partisan influence, because even at the judicature level, it must be remembered, as I pointed out the other day, that in most cases, judges are appointed by virtue of their political ties.

Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) stated that he advocated the appointment of judges instead of commissioners for the redistribution job in the various provinces. Moreover, as I said before, I think the commissions should be created at the provincial or regional level throughout the country, and that there should be five or six commissions which would represent the various territories of our country. Besides, these commissions should include members who understand the needs of the different areas, in order to be in a position to proceed accordingly with redistribution.

Mr. Chairman, this brings me to mention the inconsistency we have shown at election time ever since 1867, as the problem of redistribution dates back to the beginning of confederation, when everybody admitted that the distribution of ridings had to be constantly revised.

Today it is more and more obvious that an immediate redistribution is necessary in order to be fair with everybody. At the present time, elections are made to the prejudice of several citizens of this country. We find that there are several parties which would nevertheless like to have elections in ridings where they know that justice will not be done to voters after the election.

I believe that the fact that the present distribution is inadequate should be taken into consideration before considering whether to bring about an election because the parties already agree the Canadian people, in the event of another election, would be unfairly treated on account of the wrong distribution of the constituencies.

There is a view, Mr. Chairman, which it would be wise to remember. If, as I suggest,